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Ministry of Forests

FUNDING TO STRENGTHEN VALUE-ADDED SECTOR

KELOWNA – The government has awarded $3.2 million in grants under the Forest Investment Account for international marketing and product development to help strengthen B.C.'s value-added sector and create new jobs, Forests Minister Michael de Jong announced today.

"With this announcement, we're delivering on two New Era commitments," said de Jong. "We're applying revenue to the global marketing of B.C.'s forest practices and products, and we're doing so through a fair and open tendering process."

Eight projects in the value-added sector will receive funding under the Forestry Innovation Investment program of the Forest Investment Account. These international marketing programs and product development projects are cost-shared with industry groups.

"The world should know that our products are among the best and the greenest in the world," said de Jong. "If we didn't know before the softwood dispute, we know now that we need to build relationships with customers around the world."

A request for proposals was issued this summer. Proposals were evaluated by the Forest Investment Council, made up of representatives from government, industry and the science and technology sector. The council was supported by an advisory board with technical expertise.

Today's investments are part of the $20-million fund for forest-sector diversification and international marketing launched in March. Funding for projects in the primary sector, as well as another $20 million for applied research projects, will be announced at a later date.

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Photos of this event are expected to be posted by 3 p.m. today at the Ministry of Forests Media Centre at http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/pab/media/.

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1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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